

CLASSIFICATION

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TO : Department of State

INFO : Amembassies MANAGUA, SAN SALVADOR, TEGUCIGALPA, DOD,
USCINCSO FOR POLAD

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: Oct 12 68

SUBJECT : Internal Security Report: October 5-11, 1968

REF : DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/CR

REVIEWED BY *Euf* DATE 7 OCT 1968
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
OCT 14 1968

1. Relative calm continued into a fourth week under State of Siege conditions. The Government has apparently taken a highly significant step in beginning to control the armed civilian bands in the Zacapa area. Otherwise, there were few noteworthy incidents.

2. The Embassy has received several reports that on "instructions from Guatemala City" (probably the Minister of Defense), the Commander of the Zacapa Military Base gave the leaders of the armed civilian groups an ultimatum to return the weapons doled out by the military during the 1966-67 COIN operations in the region. The principal leader of these bands, Oliveira CASTAÑEDA Paiz, reportedly tried to rally support against this order from the MLN and dissident military officers but without success. Apparently the vigilantes are complying peacefully with the demand and are returning some weapons. COMMENT: How many they will attempt to cache is a matter for conjecture, but should not obscure the importance of the fact that the bands could not obtain the firm support of any group outside the area and that they decided to comply, albeit unhappily. Until the firepower of these bands is reduced, they need not rely upon government support; once reduced and their capability for independent action accordingly limited, the hope exists that the government will be able to exert meaningful authority in the Zacapa region.

3. The recently-elected mayor of San Pedro Pinula in the Department of Jalapa was slain by unidentified men on October 3. Nicomedes LOPEZ Nájera had won election as the MLN/PID Coalition candidate in the August 11 elections. IMPACTO eulogies painted him as a supporter of the Liberation, who had worked diligently to protect the rights of local Indian communities.

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